

**Appendix D: Trail Assessment**



To: Wehle Core Team Members  
From: Casey Holzworth  
Re: Trail Assessment Site Visit – Wehle State Park

A field evaluation of the Robert G. Wehle State Park trail system was conducted on April 20, 2010 by OPRHP staff members Casey Holzworth, Dan Heneka, John Shultz and Bob Smolka. During this evaluation, staff walked sections of the trails that were under evaluation for closure or relocation and assessed the need to re-route or close trails. In addition, sections of trails that had been identified as “wet areas,” or as being located in NWI wetlands, were field-checked.

This report includes photos of each problem area, a brief overview of the field evaluation and a recommendation for action. Photos are numbered and keyed to the attached site location map. An arrow indicates the direction of the photo.

During the survey, OPRHP field staff agreed to the following actions:

- The portion of the Dancing Gypsy trail adjacent to the property line fence (1) and the trail noted as the “Jungle cutoff” (10) would both be removed from use due to their duplicative nature and wetland considerations.
- A small loop of the Jungle trail that crosses the Marksman trail twice will be removed. The remaining trail will be named both Jungle and Marksman (2).

The following trail sections will need future evaluation to monitor for trail surface issues or possible removal from the trail system:

- The north-south unnamed trail located between Dancing Gypsy and the access road along the firing range. This trail is narrow and rugged and seemed to pose a maintenance problem. Both Dancing Gypsy and the access road accomplish a very similar trail connectivity goal. However, this trail may be favored by mountain bikers for its more difficult terrain (3).
- The unnamed trail south of the rental compound, which connects the north-south unnamed trail from Huckleberry to Marksman to the access road (4).
- The two areas of the Jungle trail on either side of the intersection with the Snakefoot that intersect with the mapped boundary of NWI wetlands (5). Both areas are wet but passable at this time.

The trail sections 1, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 14 appear to be located within federal wetland areas and, if not re-routed around the wetland, the next steps to address these areas may be subject to federal regulation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Nationwide Permit 42 allows for the discharge of fill into “waters of the U.S.” (i.e. federal wetlands) for the purpose of recreational activities including hiking trails. This permit could be used but the total fill area of all proposed improvements would have to be below a one-half acre threshold. These permits can be obtained but a more detailed survey would be required to demonstrate that no feasible alternatives exist to avoid the wetlands. Construction of a boardwalk over these areas would not require a permit, however, the possible minimal depth to bedrock and our use of large mowing equipment for management could make boardwalks problematic.

1. Dancing Gypsy – Field inspection found a roughly 50' wetland crossing with areas of the trail completely submerged. This trail is recommended for closure due to trail planning considerations (two trails, same name and destination). The presence of this wetland crossing supports that decision.

Regulated by: Army Corps

Recommended action: Trail removal



6. Knickerbocker – This site was confirmed as a wetland crossing. The crossing is narrow (15-20') and there did not appear to be an easy re-route around the wetland. The trail was still passable in the middle.

Regulated by: Army Corps

Recommended action: Boardwalk



7. Dancing Gypsy – The area marked as wet at the northern limits of the trail was not very wet upon inspection. Clay-based soils may eventually become wetland but plant community did not show full wetland characteristics. Area was soft but no surface water was present.

Regulated by: None

Recommended action: None





8. Marksmen – The location of a wet spot indicates an area of compaction and rutting that has caused relatively deep pools of standing water (approx. 40 ft. long), however, the trail in this area passes through approximately 150 ft. of wetlands that are currently passable.

Regulated by: Army Corps

Recommended action: Multiple Boardwalks or re-route



9. Jungle Cut-off – A culvert to the right of this picture, under the north-south portion of the Jungle Trail, connects this wetland area to the large wetland complex extending across military road and beyond the park boundary. This wet area, measuring approximately 60 feet, is only passable in the driest of times.

Regulated by: Army Corps and DEC

Recommended action: Trail removal



10. Snakefoot – 1000 feet south of the intersection with Marksman/Park Road field inspection found approximately 30 feet of impounded wet area through larger wetland crossing.

Regulated by: Army Corps

Recommended action: Boardwalk or Trail re-route





11. Bobolink – Approximately 40 ft. wetland crossing with an approximately 20 ft. surface water crossing. Wetland does not extend far to the north.

Regulated by: Army Corps

Recommended action: Boardwalk or Trail re-route



12. Bobolink – Portion of trail through sensitive alvar area. Alvar does not extend far to the north (left) (25') but does extend far to the south (right) (450'+). This trail appears to be on the edge of the alvar area. Moving the trail any further out of the area would not provide the educational opportunity that this crossing provides. The current location does a reasonably good job of limiting travel to the outskirts of the area.  
Recommendation: No re-route



12. Bobolink – Photo shows close-up of trail through sensitive alvar area. Although there is certainly some damage to the alvar within the path of the trail, the trail is not devoid of alvar vegetation and has not been severely eroded.

Recommendation: Placement of large stones as a border to provide for a more clearly defined trail to keep visitors and equipment from unnecessarily leaving the trail.





13. Huckleberry – Photo shows an area of trail through pavement barrens just east of intersection with un-named trail headed south. Un-named trail to the south (14) was planned to become the new alignment of Huckleberry and this portion of Huckleberry was to be closed. The un-named trail (14) appears to travel along a relatively clear edge of the pavement barrens, which extends to the north of the trail while Huckleberry appears to traverse directly through the barrens, each providing a different experience of the barrens. Recommendation: Further evaluation



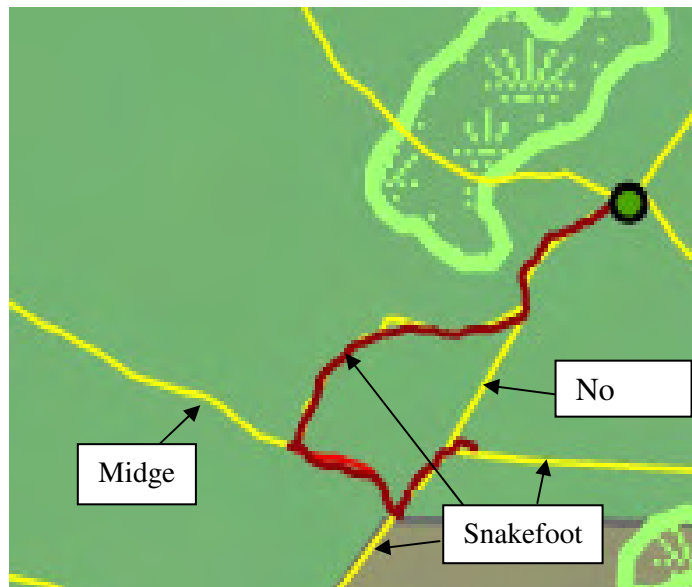
15. Un-named trail headed north from Huckleberry Trail. This trail, too, goes through the middle of pavement barrens. The trail also crosses a wetland just south of the intersection with the other un-named trail that connects to the utility access road. No wetlands were identified on the second un-named trail (4) or the nearby Midge trail suggesting that the wetland may be small in nature and that a re-route may be possible to avoid wetlands.

Regulated by: Army Corps

Recommended action: Boardwalk or Trail re-route



16. Snakefoot/Midge – This section of trail was very confusing. The section of Snakefoot that continues north from the intersection does not exist. The trail to the west is the start of a cut-around to avoid a difficult area and is considered to be part of Snakefoot. On the ground, Midge starts where the yellow line extends to the west. The completion of the Snakefoot trail heading north and the re-alignment of the Midge trail to cross the Snakefoot trail where the Snakefoot trail splits and traverses to the east is planned and recommended. Once this re-alignment is complete, the current cut-around should be removed.





# Wehle State Park Trails Assessment Location Map



NWI Wetlands



DEC Wetlands

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

